Date	09 November 2023
Agenda Item	11

INTEGRATED HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE
WEST LOTHIAN
WORKING FOR WELLBEING

Report to West Lothian Integration Joint Board

Report Title: NHS Lothian Women's Health Plan

Report By: Chief Officer

Summary of Report and Implications	
Purpose	This report:
	- seeks a decision ☐
	- is to provide assurance ☐
	- is for information ☑
	- is for discussion ☐
	The purpose of this report is to provide information on the Scottish Government Women's Health Plan, and progress in developing a Lothian response.
Recommendations	• Note the Scottish Government (SG) Women's Health Plan • Note progress in developing a Lothian response
Directions to NHS Lothian and/or West Lothian Council	A direction is not required.
Resource/ Finance/ Staffing	The main resource implication in taking forward this work is the time and expertise of those who need to be involved. There is no specific resource allocated for delivery of the SG Women's Health Plan.
Policy/Legal	The SG Women's Health Plan is specifically intended to reduce health inequalities experienced by women.
Risk	The main risk to delivery of this work is the availability of stakeholders.

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Equality, Health Inequalities, Environmental and Sustainability Issues	The intent of this work is to reduce inequalities in health outcomes affecting women, utilising existing resources.
Strategic Planning and Commissioning	The ambition and principles of the SG Women's Health Plan are aligned with the vision of the Lothian Strategic Development Framework, with healthcare centred around the individual, supporting them to live a longer and healthier life with better outcomes from the care and treatment we provide and better experiences for those who use our services and work for and with us.
Locality Planning	No specific locality requirements.
Engagement	Women's voices and experiences are central to the SG Women's Health Plan. Reports from both a Lived Experience survey and discussion event facilitated by the Health & Social Care Alliance Scotland informed the SG plan. The Lothian Women's Health Plan will be informed by responses received while engaging with people who live in Lothian about the SDF, as well as a number of other reports on engagement activity undertaken by others, including the third sector. It is proposed that a wider period of public engagement is undertaken to share our draft proposals and seek comments and feedback from women and girls who live and work in Lothian.

Terms of Report	
1.	**Background**
1.1	The Women's Health Plan: A Plan for 2021-24 was published in August 2021 and sets out how the Scottish Government intends to reduce inequalities in health outcomes affecting women.
1.2	The Women's Health Plan acknowledges that 'women face particular health inequalities an, in some cases, disadvantages because they are women'.
1.3	Evidence demonstrates that women do not always receive equal healthcare to men, and that women experience poorer outcomes than men. Women may present with disease in different ways to men, can be undertreated and have often been excluded from medical trials and research. Despite evidence that one in three women in the UK will experience reproductive or gynaecological health problems during their lifetime, only 2.1% of publicly-funded research in 2018 was dedicated solely to reproductive health and childbirth. 'Simply put, we know less about how best to treat diseases in women'.
1.4	The plan also highlights inequities within the health and social care workforce, including occupational segregation, with women under-represented in some areas.

1.5 Women are more at risk of poverty than men, and are more likely to live in working poverty. Women are also more likely to experience gender-based violence. These instances lead to avoidable health inequalities for women.

1.6 Women have also been disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly in the area of employment. Women made up the majority of furloughed staff in Scotland, and mothers were found to be more likely 'to have quit or lost their job, or to have been furloughed'.

1.7 Underpinned by four principles, the ambition of the Women's Health Plan is 'for a Scotland where health outcomes are equitable across the population, so that all women enjoy the best possible health throughout their lives'.

1.8 The initial priorities of the plan are:

- Ensure women who need it have access to **specialist menopause services** for advice and support on the diagnosis and management of menopause
- Improve access for women to appropriate support, speedy diagnosis and best treatment for **endometriosis**
- Improve access to information for girls and women on **menstrual health and management options**
- Improve access to **abortion and contraception services**
- Ensure rapid and easily accessible **postnatal contraception**
- **Reduce inequalities in health outcomes for women's general health**, including work on cardiac disease

1.9 For each priority area, a series of actions have been identified with an anticipated timescale for delivery – one, two or three years. Further actions that are relevant across all priority areas are also set out.

2. Lothian Approach

2.1 The ambition and principles of the Women's Health Plan are aligned with the vision of the Lothian Strategic Development Framework, with healthcare centred around the individual, supporting them to live a longer and healthier life with better outcomes from the care and treatment we provide and better experiences for those who use our services and work for and with us.

2.2 NHS Boards have been asked to nominate a lead contact for Women's Health. In Lothian, this role is shared with the Director of Public Health and Health Policy providing an executive leadership role and the Head of Strategy Development providing an implementation lead role.

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2.4 A short life working group as been established in Lothian, drawing senior stakeholders from across the health and care system. An initial scoping exercise was undertaken between January – April 2023 to understand our position against the priorities, aims and actions of the women's health plan. In May 2023, the Scottish Government Women's Health Champion visited Lothian to meet with stakeholders and discuss achievements and challenges.

2.5 A high-level NHS Lothian Women's Health Plan is currently in development.

Appendices	None
References	Scottish Government Women's Health Plan: A plan for 2021-24
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